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Gary Shapiro

University of Richmond, gshapiro@richmond.edu

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“This Is Not a Christ”

*Nietzsche, Foucault,
and the Genealogy of Vision*

Gary Shapiro

I

There is nothing surprising about linking the names of Nietzsche and Foucault, something that Foucault himself frequently did. We know that the practices of archaeology and genealogy owe much to *On the Genealogy of Morals*; and in *The Order of Things* Foucault celebrates Nietzsche for being able to look beyond the epoch of “man and his doubles,” thinking of the *Übermensch* as designating that which is beyond man, and for serving, along with Mallarmé, as one of the prophets of the hegemony of language in the emerging episteme of the postmodern world. Here I want to focus on other affinities, influences, or inspirations that have to do with what these thinkers saw, that is, their engagement with visual culture and visual art. Foucault is a theorist of the visual and of the complex and sometimes uncanny relations between the visual and the linguistic, a thought that is expressed gnominically in his reading of Velázquez’s *Las Meninas* when he says that “the relation of painting to language is an infinite relation.”¹ In addition to his essay on René Magritte, *This Is Not a Pipe*, which contains the outlines of an archaeology of Western painting, the rest of Foucault’s work is full of references to the painters of madness (e.g., Bosch and Goya) and to the artists of his own time: for example, there are passages on Andy Warhol and introductions to the work of the photographer Duane Michals and the photographic painter Gerard Fromanger.² Foucault began a book on

Edouard Manet, which apparently would have developed the suggestion that the artist inaugurates or exemplifies a turn within painting to the kind of intertextuality in which pictures refer to other pictures through the medium of the museum; this parallels the literary intertextuality that Gustave Flaubert exemplified in *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, which is said to constitute a “Fantasia of the Library.”³ We can imagine that such a work from Foucault would have put a new, archaeological spin on ideas about museum culture and the age of technical reproduction that are associated with André Malraux and Walter Benjamin.

Beyond the explicit discussions of visual art in Foucault’s writing, there is a rather constant concern with visual scenarios and mechanisms of power, perhaps the best known being the execution scenes and the interrogation of panoptic strategies in *Surveillance and Punishment*, but such inquiry also marks a work like *The Birth of the Clinic*, which explores the development of the clinical gaze and sets itself the task of “re-examin[ing] the original distribution of the visible and the invisible.”⁴ This last phrase contains the formula for the critical but implicit dialogue with Merleau-Ponty that runs through Foucault’s concern with the visual and is most evident in the chapter on *Las Meninas* in which he deploys the phenomenologist’s language of the visible and the invisible to suggest that their relation must be understood archaeologically rather than as a timeless foundation of all expression and communication.⁵

In *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, Martin Jay claims that Foucault joins many other twentieth-century thinkers in denouncing the traditional philosophical primacy of vision, demoting it from the position that Plato awarded it as “the noblest of the senses.”⁶ I suggest that closer attention to Foucault’s texts (as well as to those of several other writers discussed by Jay) will show that it is more specifically a certain model of vision that Foucault is exposing and contesting, while he develops an alternative conception. This alternative involves both a deeply historical or archaeological account of the radical shifts in visual culture and a suggestion of the forms that can be taken by a visual resistance to prevailing modes of display and surveillance: we have not only the Panopticon but also Manet and not only the photographic and video mechanisms of fixing identities but also the styles of Magritte, Warhol, and Michals to disrupt them.⁷ Foucault is not opposed to “the visual turn” that many observers, such as W. J. T. Mitchell, have detected in recent work in the humanities; his work is already being used to give that tendency a greater degree of his-

torical depth and has a potential for exploring issues that philosophers, literary critics, and art historians are just beginning to consider with regard to "the original distribution of the visible and the invisible."

This dimension of Foucault's work has Nietzschean sources and parallels; considering these will help to clarify the projects of both thinkers and to show how they intersect with the rethinking of visuality that is on the current intellectual agenda. It might be thought that Nietzsche, with his notoriously poor vision, has little to say about that sense; yet frequently the place of one's wound is also the source of one's genius. Let us recall that what recurs in eternal recurrence is the *Augenblick*, the moment of vision, or the twinkling of an eye. And while it is clear that the *Augenblick* is not exclusively or narrowly visual, respect for Nietzsche's writing ought to make us linger a bit with his choice of this word. It might be said, with some justice, that a German speaker does not hear the visual connotations of *Auge* and *Blick* here (as it is sometimes said that the *Hand* in Heidegger's *zuhanden* is similarly inaudible). If that is the case, the text of the chapter in *Zarathustra* called "On the Vision and the Riddle" does much to emphasize precisely that visual dimension, beginning with its title. The lighting is set rather precisely in "the deadly pallor of dusk," and the central scene, where Zarathustra confronts the dwarf who embodies the spirit of gravity, is described in terms of their contemplation of a gateway inscribed with the word *Augenblick*. And before arriving at the gateway Zarathustra challenges the dwarf to rethink the nature of vision by asking "Is not seeing itself—seeing abysses? [*Ist Sehen nicht selber—Abgründe sehen?*]" (Z:3 "On the Vision and the Riddle").⁸ To consider vision as necessarily seeing abysses is to understand it as indefinitely open and complex; it is to theorize it as necessarily multiple and perspectival. Such an approach is to be sharply distinguished from the model of the fixed and totalizing gaze that haunts philosophy and common sense, and which is sometimes, with rough justice, associated with the system of rigorous perspective developed in quattrocento painting or with the optics of Descartes.⁹

I want to suggest some of the connections between Nietzsche and Foucault, and some of the implications that their work may have for the visual turn in recent critical thought, by focusing on the readings that they give of two ostensibly quite different paintings. Let us begin by considering Foucault's reading of Magritte's work *Les deux mystères* in *This Is Not a Pipe*, a painting that is one of the great emblems of surrealism. This picture, like the scene set by Nietzsche in *Zarathustra*, involves not only a vision and a riddle but also an inscription that marks a visual dis-

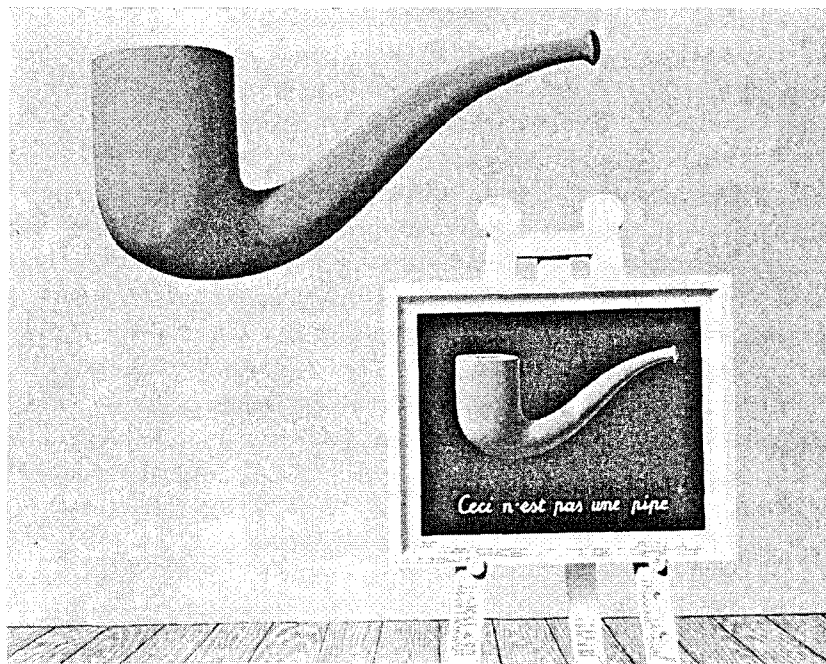


Figure 1. René Magritte, *Les deux mystères*. © 1999 C. Herscovici, Brussels / Artists Rights Society, New York.

play. Perhaps, as Foucault suggests, this painting also provides a look into the abyss and helps us to discover once more that all vision is seeing abysses. Foucault makes sense of this painting, providing a verbal commentary on and counterpart to it, an *ekphrasis* as it is called in the rhetorical and art historical traditions, in something of the spirit of Vasari or Diderot. At the same time he is sensitive to the guideline that he had laid down earlier, according to which

the relation of language to painting is an infinite relation. It is not that words are imperfect, or that, when confronted by the visible, they prove insuperably inadequate. Neither can be reduced to the other's terms: it is in vain that we say what we see; what we see never resides in what we say.¹⁰

To begin tracing out the complexity of a painting that itself involves a linguistic element, Foucault imagines that the blackboard that very ostentatiously offers an image of a pipe along with the inscription "*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*" is part of a scene of instruction that itself involves the relation between the visual and the linguistic; in his reconstruction

a teacher attempts to demonstrate the distinction between words and things by insisting that words, images, or representations are not to be confused with that which they designate, or depict, or to which they refer. The teacher is commenting, perhaps a bit clumsily, on the infinite relation of the visible and the linguistic. While this very sincere pedagogue is intoning his lesson, and in the process has found it necessary to make ever more complex and reflexive formulations that will guard at every level against the possibility of confusing words and things, another pipe or image appears, floating above what we see on the easel. As Foucault describes it:

Negations multiply themselves, the voice is confused and choked. The baffled master lowers his extended pointer, turns his back to the board, regards the uproarious students, and does not realize that they laugh so loudly because above the blackboard and his stammered denials, a vapor has just risen, little by little taking shape and now creating, precisely and without a doubt, a pipe. "A pipe, a pipe," cry the students, stamping away while the teacher, his voice sinking ever lower, murmurs always with the same obstinacy though no one is listening, "And yet it is not a pipe." He is not mistaken.¹¹

Foucault's account of how this painting achieves its effect can be explicated by and is probably indebted to Gilles Deleuze's understanding of eternal recurrence and of the simulacrum; these in turn derive from Nietzsche.¹² Let me state just a few of Foucault's explicit or implicit claims about this painting and Magritte's other work: the paintings confront us with the necessity of thinking the simulacrum, that is, the image that is a copy of a copy, an image that finally floats free of any tie to an original; this image *floats*—that is, like the simulacrum as understood by the Epicureans it has a filmy or vaporous status, as exemplified by the upper pipe; the work maintains a complex balance between language and visual image; it participates in both by virtue of being an unraveled calligram; the work sets up a series of distinctions between various actual and virtual audiences in terms of their naïveté or depth of understanding of the scene. Moreover, Foucault suggests somewhat indirectly that Nietzsche's thought of eternal recurrence is a good way of theorizing the indefinite repetition of the simulacrum and the way in which it functions without being anchored to any foundational reality.

Foucault's theorization of the simulacrum in the 1960s ought to be seen against the background of the emergence of pop art. In a stunning page on Warhol, he sketches a way of reading the repetition of images

as a way of summoning forth the “phantasm,” the free-floating and infinitely replicable simulacrum.

This is the greatness of Warhol with his canned foods, senseless accidents, and his series of advertising smiles: the oral and nutritional equivalents of those half-open lips, teeth, tomato sauce, that hygiene based on detergents; the equivalence of death in the cavity of an eviscerated car, at the top of a telephone pole and at the end of a wire, and between the glistening steel blue arms of the electric chair. . . . [I]n concentrating on this boundless monotony, we find the sudden illumination of multiplicity itself—with nothing at its center, at its highest point, or beyond it—a flickering of light that travels even faster than the eyes and successively lights up the moving labels and the captive snapshots that refer to each other to eternity, without ever saying anything; suddenly, arising from the background of the old inertia of equivalences, the striped form of the event tears through the darkness, and the eternal phantasm informs that soup can, that singular and depthless face.¹³

“Nothing at its center”: this can be read as saying, with Nietzsche, that there is no center, or in Buddhist fashion as suggesting that the center is nothingness. Perhaps it is an odd place, Warhol in Paris of the 1960s, for a meeting between Nietzsche and the Buddha. Foucault ends *This Is Not a Pipe* with a mantra:

A day will come when, by means of similitude relayed indefinitely along the length of a series, the image itself, along with the name it bears, will lose its identity. Campbell, Campbell, Campbell, Campbell.¹⁴

II

Nietzsche's fullest exploration of an individual painting has a much more explicit connection with a religious tradition. He offers a commentary on Raphael's *Transfiguration* in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Before re-reading this text, we should recall that the *Transfiguration* occupies a special place in Raphael's work and in the veneration of Raphael that was practiced by figures like Vasari, Goethe, and Jacob Burckhardt. It was Raphael's last painting, and there is a continuing dispute over exactly how complete it was at the time of his death. We know from Vasari that it was displayed at the time of his funeral in the Pantheon. Critics have long been divided on the question of whether and to what extent it is a unified work and whether it marks the possibility of a new departure in Raphael's art that would lead away from classicism to a style that tolerates greater ruptures and discontinuities. There are two distinct scenes in the painting, based on two Gospel texts that narrate different

episodes. Some critics have found that the work does not succeed in unifying these two disparate segments, but the usual verdict has been that Raphael daringly created an unexpected and higher unity by combining them. This was the opinion of Goethe, recorded in his *Italian Journey*, which Nietzsche would almost certainly have read; recounting his viewing the painting with a group in Rome, he tells us,

The quieter members of the group were annoyed to hear a repetition of the old criticism that it has a double action. . . . [I]t is odd that anyone should ever have found fault with the grand unity of this conception. . . . How, then, are those upper and lower parts to be separated? The two are one: below, the suffering part, in need of help; above, the effective, helpful part, both of them linked together. To express the sense of this in another way: can the connection between the conceptual and the real be severed?¹⁵

It is to this painting, the most controversial work of the Italian artist universally revered by the Germans who discovered or constructed the Renaissance, that Nietzsche turns when he wants a visual illustration of his new theory of art.

It is worth noting that in a book supposedly consecrated to the spirit of music, Nietzsche has so much to say about the visual world, including the visual aspect of tragedy, something that, as he says, escapes the "one great Cyclops eye" of Socrates. In rereading this familiar passage, I think we can discern some of the same themes that appear in Foucault's essay on Magritte. Nietzsche introduces this *ekphrasis* in section 4 of the *Birth*, where he is describing the Apollonian form of art:

In a symbolic painting, *Raphael*, himself one of these immortal "naive" ones, has represented this disempowerment [*Depotenzieren*] of appearance [*Schein*] to the level of mere appearance, the primitive process of the naive artist and of Apollinian culture. In his *Transfiguration*, the lower half of the picture, with the possessed boy, the despairing bearers, the bewildered, terrified disciples, shows us the reflection of suffering, primal and eternal, the sole ground of the world: the "mere appearance" here is the reflection of eternal contradiction, the father of things. From this mere appearance arises, like ambrosial vapor [*Duft*], a new visionary world of mere appearances, invisible to those wrapped in the first appearance—a radiant floating [*Schweben*] in purest bliss, a serene contemplation beaming from wide-open eyes. Here we have presented in the highest artistic symbolism, that Apollinian world of beauty and its substratum, the terrible wisdom of Silenus; and intuitively we comprehend their necessary interdependence. Apollo, however, again appears to us as the apotheosis of the *principium individuationis*, in which alone is consummated the perpetually attained goal of the primal unity, its redemption through mere appearance. With his sublime gestures, he shows us how necessary is

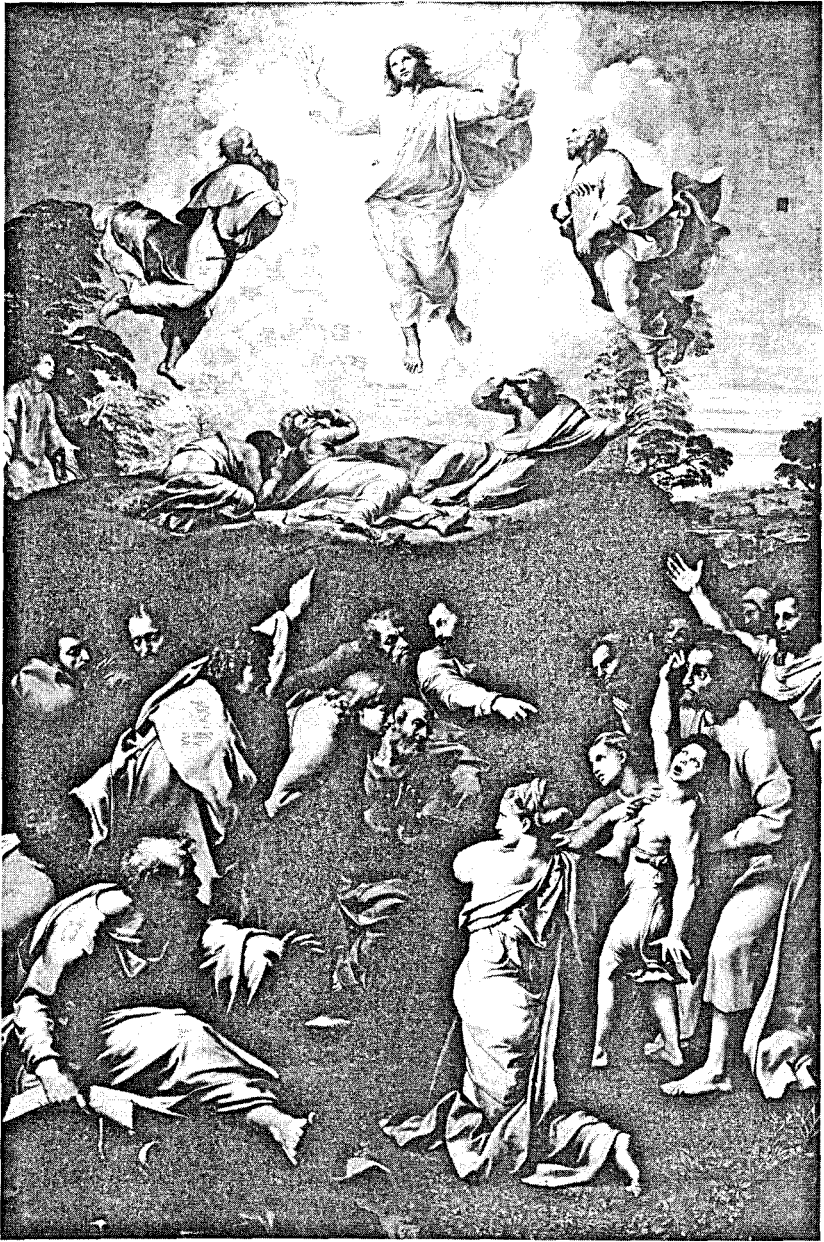


Figure 2. Raphael, *Transfiguration*.

the entire world of suffering, that by means of it an individual may be impelled to realize the redeeming vision, and then, sunk in contemplation of it, sit quietly in his tossing bark, amid the waves. (BT 4)

Nietzsche had not seen this painting, other than in reproductions, at the time that he wrote the passage, for he had not yet visited Rome. He had probably seen Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* (on which he comments in *The Wanderer and His Shadow* 73), which is in Dresden. But he would have been acquainted with the rich tradition of Raphael worship among the Germans, and he certainly would have been familiar with Burckhardt's paean to Raphael and to the *Transfiguration* in particular, which is to be found in his *Cicerone*, a book that Nietzsche often praised as invaluable; and Nietzsche would have heard Burckhardt expounding such views in lectures and conversation.¹⁶

What is striking in Nietzsche's *ekphrasis* is the stress on appearance as appearance, *Schein als Schein*, which emphasizes that what we see is illusion, shining, radiance, appearance severed from any ground. This shining is the simulacrum, that whose nature is simply to shine or to appear. It may be that this is why Nietzsche transfigures the *Transfiguration* by identifying the floating figure as Apollo, for to name him as Christ would be to become involved in questions of how the radiant appearance is caused by, grounded in, or expressive of some deeper principle. Raphael had made a design for the work in which God the Father did appear in the upper level of the painting and Jesus was shown as transfigured, but there was no scene involving the possessed boy. In this respect the artist already begins the work of expelling the level of the transcendent that Nietzsche observes in the painting.¹⁷ The two levels of the *Transfiguration* make it eminently suitable to demonstrate the way in which Apollonian art has the capacity to represent, include, and transcend the Dionysian. Of course, it represents the Dionysian only by giving it Apollonian form; in a stricter sense we might say that the Dionysian cannot be represented but only embodied or performed.

As Burckhardt and subsequent historians of art point out, Raphael has done something quite daring in juxtaposing two quite different scenes from the Gospels, one in which the disciples fail to heal a possessed boy, because their faith is not great enough; and one that precedes it narratively, and is not necessarily set in the same place, in which Jesus is transfigured, accompanied by the figures of Elijah and Moses. Burckhardt is impressed by the floating, arguing that Raphael's Christ is the first successful floating figure in Italian art and that "the form and expression of

Christ reveal one of the great secrets of art, which sometimes elude the endeavors of centuries.”¹⁸ The secret has to do with the representation of a floating and radiant being, and here Nietzsche seems to be in agreement with Burckhardt. The imagination of the believer, following the biblical text, which tells us that “his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as light” (Matt. 17:2), requires a presentation of Jesus that, according to Burckhardt, “presupposes a brilliant self-contained illumination of the form, and therefore the absence of all shadow, as well as of all modeling.”¹⁹ But this is impossible and defeats the principles of painting, at least of the style that Raphael was practicing; the solution, Burckhardt adds, was for Raphael to substitute floating for this impossibility of a nonmodeled, nonshadowed figure. In other words, Raphael comes as close as possible, within the conventions of his art, to producing a figure that exemplifies *Schein als Schein*. About one hundred years later, Foucault will discern Magritte’s floating pipe as playing a role that closely parallels this floating Christ.

Or is this figure indeed Christ? Nietzsche implicitly raises the question by referring to the floating apparition as Apollo, the radiant and shining god, the god of appearances and visual manifestations. Has not Nietzsche transfigured Raphael’s ostensibly Christian *Transfiguration*? Keeping Magritte in mind, we might wonder whether the painting is effectively being retitled “This Is Not a Christ.” Thinking about the two paintings together, along with the *ekphrases* of Nietzsche and Foucault, we might detect some uncanny affinities; we can now acknowledge the surrealist dimension in the great classicist Raphael while recognizing that Magritte may not be wholly unconcerned with religious themes. The same point could be restated from the standpoint of art history. Hans Belting, in his great study of Byzantine art, *Likeness and Presence*, demonstrates that the icon was not considered merely as the representation or likeness of the saint but as the saint’s very manifestation.²⁰ Typically, icons were not displayed but kept under wraps and taken out only on special occasions, such as the feast day of the saint. As Italian art moved away from Byzantine thought and practice, it came to understand the image as a likeness, not a reality; or in the terms of German aesthetics, as adapted by Nietzsche, it came to a point where it was able to acknowledge and even celebrate *Schein als Schein*.

I observed earlier that Nietzsche sees the *Transfiguration* as one of the highest exemplars of Apollonian art. This is true, but it overlooks the specific context within which he makes this claim. In section 4 of the *Birth* Nietzsche is still examining the analogy between art and the dream,

and he is attempting to show how this analogy illuminates the case of the naive artist. In the course of this discussion, he implies not only that the naive artist is Apollonian and inspired by dreams or dreamlike states but also that we require such art to show us what dreams are. Art is not merely a form or consequence of the dream but the first way that we have of gaining access to it. Or as Freud said a quarter of a century later, the poets and artists showed the way long before his own work of *Traumdeutung*.

The naive artist of whom Nietzsche speaks is naive in no pejorative sense; indeed Nietzsche's writings are full of praise for Raphael, who is frequently cited as a supreme artistic genius and three of whose paintings are subjects of rather detailed discussion, an honor he accords to no other painter. The naive artist, in the German aesthetic tradition that Nietzsche draws on here, must be understood in terms of Schiller's distinction of the naive and the sentimental. Schiller's simplest formulation is that the naive poet *is* nature while the sentimental poet *seeks* nature. The naive artist is there in the material, in the work itself; we might say that such artists are self-effacing, except that as they have never been the themes of their own work there is no call for effacement. The sentimental artist is concerned with his or her own feelings and responses and does not let us forget them. In considering the case of the naive artist Nietzsche generalizes considerably on Schiller's formulation; he wants to understand the artist who is enthralled by the content and structure of the dream, and apparently indifferent to his own role in it.

The dreamer whom Nietzsche imagines is so immersed in the dream that "in the midst of the illusion of the dream world and without disturbing it, he calls out to himself: 'It is a dream, I will dream on'" (BT 4). Today this would be called an instance of lucid dreaming, in which the dreamer chooses to prolong and explore his or her own dream; Nietzsche instead emphasizes the element of submission or acceptance in the dreamer's attitude. And he suggests that we can interpret such phenomena by following "the dream-reading Apollo," who is also the god of radiance and of painting. As Nietzsche's *ekphrasis* of Raphael implies, Apollo is not only the god who inspires such visions but is also, in this case, their subject. Reflecting on the dream, in a philosophical voice that harkens back to Schopenhauer, but is also informed by Schiller's celebration of *Schein*, Nietzsche puts forward the view that "the truly existent primal unity, eternally suffering and contradictory, also needs the rapturous vision, the pleasurable illusion, for its continuous redemption" (BT 4). Empirical and phenomenal reality are simply appearance

or illusion in this perspective; but then the dream is “a *mere appearance of mere appearance*, hence a still higher appeasement of the primordial desire for mere appearance” (BT 4).

At this point Nietzsche invokes Raphael and the *Transfiguration* to explain how the artist and the painting display “the disempowering of appearance to the level of mere appearance.” Without such display would we be able to grasp and comprehend the dream process or the activity of the Apollonian artist? On Nietzsche’s reading, what Raphael displays is the process of naive art itself; it is still naive insofar as it is not sentimental, not concerned with the persona and feelings of Raphael himself, but it is naïveté raised to a higher level insofar as it shows us the procedure of the naive itself.

Is this meant to be a timeless pronouncement about the nature and scope of painting? Let us recall that Foucault sketches an archaeology of painting, according to which there are radical breaks between the assumptions and procedures of different epochs. From a later perspective we can see that the protocols of a painting like *Las Meninas* are not those of a van Gogh self-portrait, of a Magritte, or of a Warhol wall of Marilyns or Jackies. Velázquez, Foucault maintains, was capable of representing everything but representation. Nietzsche, as we have just seen, claims that Raphael is one of those immortal naive ones just because he does display the possibility of display. These views are not necessarily inconsistent; Foucault might very well agree that the Raphael of 1520 belongs to a different regime of visibility than the Velázquez of 1650, whom he takes to be emblematic of the dawning classical age.

In *This Is Not a Pipe* Foucault begins to sketch an archaeology of Western visual culture, distinguishing the era from roughly Giotto to the impressionists as one in which words and images are kept as distinct as possible and painting is expected to provide us with only a visual scene; this is to be distinguished both from the conventions of medieval painting and illustration that preceded it and from the crisis of representation that Foucault identifies with Kandinsky, Klee, and Magritte. This is just a sketch, and it is one that would make no distinction, so far, between Raphael and Velázquez. If we were to follow the archaeology of *The Order of Things*, however, we could reconstruct a somewhat different way of distinguishing approaches to the visual.²¹ There Foucault is explicitly concerned with verbal discourses, even if he does use *Las Meninas* to illustrate the protocols of the classical age; but we might think, tentatively, of extending this archaeology to visual art. In that case, the art of the Renaissance could be seen as analogous to “the prose

of the world," in which similitude and analogy are the dominant modes of thought; painting would then have goals such as linking microcosm and macrocosm. In a painting like the *Transfiguration* this might involve showing a series of connections among art, dream, possession, and divine manifestation. The art of the classical era would attempt, like *Las Meninas*, to exhibit every function and permutation of representation but would be debarred from exploring what it is that makes representation possible, a point that Foucault makes when he says that Velázquez's painting points to an ineluctable absence, an empty space in front of the painting that is hypothetically occupied, in an unstably oscillating pattern, by the viewer, the model, and the artist himself. The visual mode of modernity, in which human beings attempt to know themselves by exploring and articulating their own limits, would produce an artistic equivalent of the "analytic of finitude." Kant, Marx, and the early Heidegger, despite what seem to be vast philosophical differences, can be seen as offering different versions of what these limits are and what their consequences might be (finitude being understood diversely here as the conditions of sensibility and representation, the necessity of labor and productivity, or the fundamental structures of anxiety and being-toward-death). The art appropriate to such an episteme would be typified by the self-portrait of the meditative or anguished artist (Cézanne or van Gogh, for example) who constantly interrogates himself and the possibility of visual representation in the same gesture. (It seems to me that Foucault would see Merleau-Ponty's valorization of Cézanne's painting as an accurate way of understanding the project of modernity but as making unwarranted claims of generality insofar as it ignores what is distinctive in other artistic epochs.) If it is the emergence of language that follows the exhaustion of the analytic of finitude and the disappearance of man, then the art form that might flourish at such a time could be one that, like the work of Magritte and Warhol,

dissociated similitude from resemblance, and brought the former into play against the latter. . . . Resemblance presupposes a primary reference that prescribes and classes. The similar develops in series that have neither beginning nor end, that can be followed in one direction as easily as in another, that obey no hierarchy, but propagate themselves from small differences and among differences.²²

Given this sketch, there appear to be a number of connections between the epoch dominated by similitude and that in which language displaces man; both are characterized by the leading role taken by an

indefinitely expansive system of structures rather than by a fixed, tabular mode of representation or by an inquiry into the limits of that being who is thought to be the condition of representation itself. From such a perspective it is possible to see how Foucault might have found Raphael to be working in a quite different epoch of visual culture than Velázquez, and how we might see the plausibility of taking works from the first and last of these eras to have some possible affinities that might escape a more conventional (and Hegelian) art history.

In any case, Nietzsche himself, after *The Birth of Tragedy*, was to mark some archaeological reservations about Raphael. One aphorism in its entirety from *Daybreak* reads,

Transfiguration.—Those that suffer helplessly, those that dream confusedly, those that are entranced by things supernatural—these are the *three divisions* into which Raphael divided mankind. This is no longer how we see the world—and Raphael too would no longer *be able* to see it as he did: he would behold a whole new transfiguration. (D 8)

In a later jotting Nietzsche notes that even a great artist like Raphael was not free of Christian infection, for “finally even his transfigured Christ is a fluttering, entranced [*schwärmerisches*] little monk that he does not dare to show naked. Goethe’s got it right there” (KSA 11:26[3]).

III

In beginning to articulate the ways in which Nietzsche and Foucault are linked as theorists of visual culture and of visual art, of *Schein* and the simulacrum, it is worth marking the fact that Foucault’s first published text, *Dream, Imagination, and Existence*, is concerned with the oneiric theme that is crucial to Nietzsche’s *Birth of Tragedy*. Like Nietzsche, Foucault wants to insist that the dream is not a secondary or marginal process but a primordial form of human existence. Ostensibly commenting on Ludwig Binswanger’s *Dream and Existence*, Foucault criticizes Freud for having an overly textual and linguistic approach to the dream; this parallels Nietzsche’s implicit criticism of Aristotle and almost the entire post-Aristotelian tradition for reducing tragedy to plot, with an accompanying demotion of music and spectacle. This is the reduction that already begins, according to *The Birth of Tragedy*, with the “one great Cyclops eye of Socrates”; Aristotle simply disagrees as to the intelligibility and the ethical meaning of tragedy once it has been so reduced. To some extent Foucault anticipates the opposition be-

tween Jacques Lacan and Jean-François Lyotard about the role of image and language in Freud's dream theory. For Lacan, Freud has a linguistic account of the dream; the images of which the dream consists are essentially, as Freud declares, a rebus, or picture puzzle that has a linguistic equivalent. According to Lyotard, it is the constant tension between language and image that characterizes the Freudian dream, and art generally.²³

What we might call the Nietzschean or Lyotardian side of Foucault's dream book is its insistence on image and imagination; there is even a suggestion that the main literary genres can be understood in terms of typical forms of dream imagination. Against any linguistic reductionism, Foucault insists on the importance of dream space and dream landscape. Yet this most Heideggerian of Foucault's texts also deviates from Nietzsche in its account of the dreamer's position with regard to his or her own dream. For Nietzsche, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, there is something impersonal or naive about the dream and the art that both illuminates it and is derived from it. For Foucault, who is sympathetically developing a strain of Heideggerian existential phenomenology that underlies Binswanger's work, the dream is a form of *Existenz*; he writes,

In the dream, everything says "I," even the things and the animals, even the empty space, even objects distant and strange which populate the phantasmagoria. . . . To dream is not another way of experiencing another world, it is for the dreaming subject the radical way of experiencing its own world.²⁴

By the time he came to write *The Order of Things*, Foucault would doubtless have rejected the subjectivism of this formulation as part of the thought characteristic of the epoch of man, and he might have seen this kind of fascination with the dream as one manifestation of the return and retreat of the origin that displays the instability of "man and his doubles."

What is notable about this early text is that, like *The Birth of Tragedy*, it proposes to see its subject in an irreducibly visual perspective, and we can find a similar motif in Foucault's later writings, some of which are explicitly concerned with visual art. If art is, as Plato said, "a waking dream," then understanding the dream's visual dimension will yield a distinctive conception of art. This approach seems to me to provide an important corrective to some attempts to categorize Foucault as a linguistic reductionist; the same applies to many others who are considered to be poststructuralists. Such readings often proceed by citing the importance of Nietzsche for these thinkers; but I have suggested some rea-

sons for thinking that we may be ready for a different approach to both thinkers, to their relationship, and to the way in which they theorize the relationship between the linguistic and the visual.

IV

The visual turn in cultural theory can be seen as a response to a change in culture generally. Traditional literacy, based on printed texts, is being displaced or demoted by a culture of the screen, which may be cinematic, video, or computer based. Newspaper editorials express dismay at the increased use of films in university classes ostensibly devoted to literature and at the rise of media studies, often focused on popular figures (as I write, concern is being voiced about courses on Madonna and Princess Diana). Precocious children, who once learned to read before their peers, now find themselves at the computer screen, manipulating an array of images sometimes accompanied by text; stories that were once children's classics, first read aloud and then accessible through the young reader's own efforts, are now encountered originally through video versions that the younger generation may very well assume to be the definitive ones, bearing the same relation to the text as does a contemporary film to its "novelization."

Juxtaposed with such changes in our use and deployment of the media, the musings of Nietzsche and Foucault about two paintings may seem rather quaint and inconsequential. Let me suggest, however, that these thinkers have resources that could help us in coming to terms with our rapidly changing cultural situation. Nietzsche's *ekphrasis* of Raphael occurs in the context of his analysis of ancient tragedy and his optimism (later abandoned) about the possibility of a rebirth of the tragic spirit, exemplified by Wagnerian performance. *The Birth of Tragedy* is not concerned simply with the musical dimension of the art, as music is conceived today; *mousiké* involves dance as well as melody and song. Moreover, Nietzsche is concerned with the visual dimension of tragedy and opera throughout the *Birth*. Part of the deficiency of current theater and opera, from his point of view, is its failure as vision or spectacle. Whereas Aristotle had classified *opsis* (spectacle) along with music as one of the less significant dimensions of tragedy, Nietzsche addresses a "friend" whom he imagines to reflect on his experience of contemporary performance; such a listener and spectator, he suggests, will have to acknowledge that

the effect of a true musical tragedy, purely and simply, as he knows it from experience . . . [will be] as if his visual faculty [*Sehkraft*] were no longer merely a surface faculty but capable of penetrating into the interior, and as if he now saw before him, with the aid of music, the waves of the will, the conflict of motives, and the swelling flood of the passions, sensuously visible, as it were, like a multitude of vividly moving lines and figures. (BT 22)

Clearly, it is Wagner, as well as Aeschylus, whom Nietzsche has in mind. He is concerned with the question of how a visual culture can be invigorating or deadening, and this was a concern that outlasted his enthusiasm for one nineteenth-century composer and showman. The analysis that he offers of ancient tragedy has a specifically visual dimension and involves what is perhaps the first statement of Nietzsche's perspectivism (even if he does not yet adopt that term). Part of what renders the Greek art unique is that it involves a kind of double vision: the spectators see the actors on the raised stage, or *skené*, but at the same time they identify with the chorus in the orchestra and project themselves into the vision that these have of the same scene. On this account the viewers are virtually seeing from two places at once; they embody a multiplicity of perspectives that Nietzsche contrasts with "the one great Cyclops eye of Socrates" (BT 14). Nietzsche thought that he was doing more than making a discovery about the conditions and techniques of the theater of Dionysus in fifth-century Athens. We might attempt a contemporary formulation of his question. How can our media be structured so that we will not be confined to a Cyclopean vision? How can we learn to work with a multiplicity of perspectives? How, in short, can vision be reframed perspectively?

Foucault articulates the archaeological dimension of Nietzsche's thought, including his thought of the visual, which is already implicit in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Although that book can be read as one more instance of the Sisyphean quest of modernism that is characterized by "the retreat and return of the origin," it can also be seen as a study of the massive ruptures that mark off from one another two forms of culture and their structuring presuppositions. Foucault updates Nietzsche's visual archaeology in his reflections on Magritte, pop art, and the oscillating boundary between the photographic and the painterly. He suggests that we need notions such as the simulacrum and eternal recurrence to make sense of the repetitive images on our many screens, in our museums, and now in our imaginations. Moreover, in keeping with his principle that every form of power is correlated with forms of resistance

(itself a restatement and politicization of Nietzsche's teaching concerning the will[s] to power) we could look to Foucault for some suggestions about the relation between hegemonic visual regimes and the practices that resist them. These connections are not thematized explicitly in Foucault's work. Although he abandoned his project on Manet in 1968, perhaps in response to political pressures that led his thought in other directions, this does not mean that such a project would have lacked a political dimension. It might have focused on the institution of the museum and other forms of the visual canon; these have a dual nature, suggesting an official, monumental history and also offering an archive with the possibility of retrieving forgotten and neglected images of opposition. The books on surveillance and the clinical gaze are contributions to a genealogy of vision that follows some Nietzschean suggestions. This project is like *The Birth of Tragedy* in juxtaposing distinct forms of visual culture, as Nietzsche contrasted the affirmative perspectivism of tragedy with the flattening out of vision ushered in by Socrates. Foucault seeks to identify an art that resists the clinical gaze and the corpse of anatomical observation with the radical image of experienced death or decay (as in Goya), or that counters the banal and soporific repetitions of advertising and television with the disruptive simulacra of Magritte and Warhol. A critical theory of our visual culture can learn from the Nietzschean attempt to counter the Cyclops eye with the hundred-eyed Argus of a perspectivism sensitive to the genealogy and archaeology of vision.

NOTES

1. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Random House, 1973), 9.

2. For Bosch, van Gogh, and Goya, see *Madness and Civilization*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: New American Library, 1967), 18, 29, 224–31; on painting and death, see *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Random House, 1975), 171; on Warhol, see *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 189. Foucault's essay on Duane Michals is "La Pensée, l'émotion," in *Duane Michals: Photographies de 1958–1982* (Paris: Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1982), iii–vii; the essay on Fromanger is the introduction to the catalog *Fromanger: Le désir est partout* (Paris: Galerie Jeanne Bucher, 1975), n.p. (10 pp.).

3. See the remarks on Manet in Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, 92–93; see also David Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 189.

4. Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*, xi.

5. For some suggestive remarks about Foucault's sense of the complex relations of the discursive and the visual, see Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Sean Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 47-70.

6. Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 383-416.

7. See Gary Shapiro, "French Aesthetics: Contemporary Painting Theory," in *The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, ed. Michael Kelly (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 2:235-40, for an attempt to develop this point succinctly with regard to a number of recent French philosophers.

8. Citations from Nietzsche's works are from the translations by Walter Kaufmann.

9. See Gary Shapiro, "In the Shadows of Philosophy: Nietzsche and the Question of Vision," in *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision*, ed. David Michael Levin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), and "Nietzsche and Visuality," in *The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, 3:364-66.

10. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 9.

11. Michel Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe*, trans. James Harkness (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 30.

12. Gary Shapiro, "Pipe Dreams: Eternal Recurrence and Simulacrum in Foucault's Ekphrasis of Magritte," in *Word & Image* (January-March 1997): 69-76.

13. Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, 189.

14. Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe*, 54.

15. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Italian Journey*, trans. Robert R. Heitner (New York: Suhrkamp, 1989), 364.

16. Nietzsche praises Burckhardt's *Cicerone* to Carl von Gersdorff in 1872, when he hears that the latter is planning a journey to Italy: "It seems to me that one should wake up and fall asleep with the reading of Burckhardt's *Cicerone*: there are few books that can so stimulate phantasy and prepare one for the conception of the artistic" (letter of 18 October 1872 [KGB II/3:68]); similar enthusiasm is expressed in a card to Mathilde Maier of 6 August 1878 (KGB II/5:345) and in a letter of 6 July 1883 to his sister Elisabeth, to whom he had just given a new edition of the book as a birthday gift (KGB III/1:391).

17. Louis Marin makes this point in his sensitive and complex essay, "Transfiguration in Raphael, Stendhal, and Nietzsche," in *Nietzsche in Italy*, ed. Thomas Harrison (Saratoga, Calif.: Anima Libri, 1988), 67-76.

18. Jacob Burckhardt, *Der Cicerone* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kroner Verlag, 1964), 857; I have generally followed the translation by Mrs. A. H. Clough (London: John Murray, 1879), 145.

19. Ibid.

20. Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

21. I have attempted to make a similar suggestion in "Art and Its Doubles: Danto, Foucault, and Their Simulacra," in *Danto and His Critics*, ed. Mark Rollins (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993), 129-41, esp. 137-39.

22. Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe*, 44.

23. See Jean-François Lyotard, "The Dream-Work Does Not Think," trans. Mary Lydon, in *The Lyotard Reader*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1989), 19–55.

24. Michel Foucault, "Dream, Imagination, and Existence," trans. Forrest Williams, *Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry* 19, no. 1 (1986): 59.